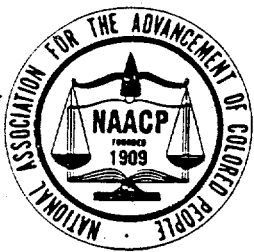


PRESENTATION TO JOINT HEARING BEFORE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY RESEARCH AND PRODUCTION
AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT
ON

"THE IMPACT OF MERCURY RELEASES AT THE OAK RIDGE COMPLEX"

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
(NAACP) Oak Ridge, Branch

Terry Weaver, President
July 11, 1983



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

Oak Ridge Branch • P.O. Box 805 • Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830 • (615) 483-8155

Man can survive as a species without cleaning up the environment, but the quality and length of our lives will suffer. The Oak Ridge community is concerned about the environment and want to take whatever steps necessary to keep it clean. Much of the material spoken and written about the mercury spill and other environmental pollutants has been presented with great emotion from a position firmly on one side or the other of the issues. The media and some scientist have dramatized and probably made exaggerated statements with respect to the immediate seriousness of the pollution problems. These frightening pronouncements are pounced on by the mass media and widely dissimilated for the public. Predictably, public emotion has risen.

I am convinced that the pollution problem is huge and very serious. I believe the community shares this conviction. Our concern about it is profound. Many of us believe or act as if we can enjoy a clean environment while someone else pays the bills. The cost of realizing even a moderate improvement in the pollution problem will be in the millions or perhaps billions of dollars and must be done by all of us.

However, there is no sense of panic because of this community's unique confidence that this problem has a technological solution. However, this does not relieve our concern. More are needed than technological answers and money.

Constructive measures applied through information and technology are the main basis of hope in meeting this environmental problem. Such a program combines innovative and interdisciplinary approaches. All areas of scholarship and learned endeavor in science, the humanities and the social sciences must be involved. This deals with the problem. But not how and why it happened.

This environmental crisis was caused by people. People in industry and government. The question becomes what can be done to prevent similar crises. This environmental crisis deals with people. Since the current crisis was caused by people, a reciprocity in kind is implied when helpful dialogue, pragmatic solutions are sought. Thus, implementation of corrective proposals should require the support of all segments of the Oak Ridge community and government.

The impact of mercury releases at the Oak Ridge complex upon citizens, may be more psychological than physical.

- 1) There is a realization that our technology poses a threat to health and safety of the citizens if not properly managed. People are asking how this could happen and why? Will it happen again?

- 2) There is a perception of betrayal. Why wasn't the public informed? What is still being kept from the public?

There is a great amount of public uncertainty about the environmental conditions in the Oak Ridge area. There is increasing concern about possible long term pollution exposure to the environment from past and present DOE-ORO accidents which have not been revealed. The uncertainty and concern can only be relieved if the public is informed by industry and government what environmental hazards are posed by DOE-ORO and how those hazards are being dealt with.

The more serious problem is public distrust. This distrust is especially acute among the residents of the Scarboro Community which is closest to the Y-12 Plant. DOE-ORO has a history of not acting in the long-range best interests of the black residents of the Scarboro Community. Governmental planning in relation to the black community has been expedient and short-sighted.

Many Scarboro residents are again wondering if DOE-ORO officials did not and continue to not act in the best interest of the community. Has industry and government replaced appropriate concern for the long range health, safety and well being of the community with expediency and short sightedness?

It is hoped that these uncertainties and concerns will be answered. Let's hope the answers meet the concerns and dispell the uncertainties.

An overview of policy at high government levels, given impetus by informed citizenry could promote the

legislation that could result not only in an early cure of the damage already effected but more importantly in the prevention of future alterations in the Oak Ridge area. The time is late but not too late. How much we care about our environment in Oak Ridge, and the persistence with which we try to achieve its protection will determine if we ourselves replenish our environment by technology and education.

This testimony is given in response to an invitation received July 7, 1983 to testify at a joint hearing on the Subcommittee on Energy Research and Production and the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight. This presentation is based on a Scarboro Community meeting in June 1983 called by Oak Ridge City Councilmen, E.H. Upton which was attended by DOE officials and concerned citizens. Comments by the Scarboro Neighborhood Improvement Association were also used. These comments are attached.

TW:db

Attachment

SCARBORO NEIGHBORHOOD
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, Inc.
OAK RIDGE, TN 37830

A. Chambles, President
200 S. Benedict Ave.
483-8922

M. Guinn, Secretary
186 S. Benedict Ave.
483-1985

Board of Directors:

A. Chambles
W. Anthony
M. Guinn
L. C. Manley, Jr.
T. Weaver 483-8155
W. Threat 483-4205
H. Land 483-3849

W. Anthony, V. President
219 S. Benedict Ave.
483-7008

L. C. Manley, Jr., Treasurer
190 S. Benedict Ave.
482-1577

June 30, 1983

Mr. James D. Harless
City of Oak Ridge
P. O. Box 1
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Dear Mr. Harless:

Thank you for providing and preparing the Certificates of Appreciation from EQAB. The certificates were presented at our June 25 meeting of the Scarboro Neighborhood Improvement Association, Inc. Mrs. Helen Land and Mr. George Reed were very appreciative of the certificates and felt much pride in being recognized by the City of Oak Ridge. I am still unsure about the publicity that they desire, but I suppose that the mentioning of their names and community contributions in the local paper would be appropriate.

I have enclosed additional environmental information on the following topics:

- I. Residents' suggestions on the placement of mercury pollution signs,
- II. Concerns about mercury and other potential environmental toxins locally,
- III. List of residents requesting soil analysis, and
- IV. Illegal dumping.

We appreciate your active interest in our environment, and we hope that a rational, appropriate, and rapid solution will be found for the widely publicized mercury pollution that has plagued our city.

Sincerely,

Al Chambles

Al Chambles, President
SNIA, Inc.

cc: E. H. Upton
C. C. Coutant

I. Suggestions on Placement of Mercury Pollution Signs on East Fork Poplar Creek

Several suggestions were made by members attending the Saturday, June 25 meeting of SNIA on the best placement of mercury pollution signs along the portion of East Fork Poplar Creek near the Scarboro Neighborhood.

1. All areas where people can easily enter the creek:
 - (a) Intersection of East Fork Poplar Creek, Tulsa Road, Wilberforce Avenue.
 - (b) On East Fork Poplar Creek in back of K-Mart.
 - (c) Intersection of East Fork Poplar Creek and Tuskegee Avenue.
 - (d) Intersection of East Fork Poplar Creek, Tulsa Road, and Burnan Woods entrance (several kids have been known to wade in the creek at that point).
2. It was reported that kids have been known to walk, wade, and play in the creek throughout its length, starting close to the outlet of New Hope Pond and ending near the Scarboro Neighborhood. In view of this, some suggested that a sign should be placed approximately every 100 yards next to the creek throughout its length. However, it is not known whether it is at all possible to create a warning sign that would capture the attention of playful kids.

II. Other Pollution Concerns

The continuing publicity about the mercury pollution has created a high level of apprehension among some residents in the Scarboro Neighborhood. The concerns expressed at the Saturday SNIA meeting are listed below:

1. Since Scarboro is in very close proximity to the Y-12 Plant, air monitoring, and soil and vegetable sampling for a wide range of potential toxic pollutants should be conducted on a continuing basis (no one at the meeting knew of an air monitor in the Scarboro Neighborhood).
2. Some expressed fear of eating vegetables grown in Scarboro.

III. Soil Analysis Requests

Two residents asked SNIA to inform the City of their desires to have their garden soil analyzed for mercury and other potentially toxic pollutants:

Mrs. Jessie Bowens
210 S. Dillard Ave.
Oak Ridge, Tennessee
482-3642

Mr. George Reed
Bettis Lane
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

IV. Illegal Dumping

Dumping of old furniture and other items has commenced again at the end of Wilberforce Avenue near the former Scarboro School and the area near the intersection of Tulsa Road and Wilberforce Avenue.